

**Hurricane Harvey Response 2017  
Community Liaison (CL) Report**

TO: Janetta Coates and Valmichael Leos

FROM: David Bryan/Jeremy Ford/Devin Pollock/Jim Stevens

SUBJECT: Hurricane Harvey Response 2017

COUNTY: Jasper and Newton Counties

DATE: 9/15/17

---

**SUMMARY:**

The team traveled to Newton County, Texas and met with citizens who were wondering about the large aircraft that was flying overhead and the mosquito spraying. We were able to relay the messaging provided to us just a day before when we sat down with the Jasper-Newton County Health District, including Dr. Danny Brechan, the director, and Angela Berry, environmental services coordinator. We explained that EPA was not doing the spraying (as they suggested) but it actually was being done by the state. We mentioned to them that the spraying is harmless to people. Two of the citizens remarked that they saw a lot of dead pests. Neighboring Jasper County was no longer going to receive mosquito spraying due to local social media protests by beekeepers and naturalists.

County elected leaders, health officials and local citizens are very much interested in having a Disaster Response Center in Jasper County to allow more information to be shared with residents. Presently, our observations show that only EPA, Small Business Administration and a Salvation Army food truck are the only activity we have seen involving responders in Jasper and Newton counties. This is drastically needed in the middle and southern portion of both counties but the entire county needs assistance.

We attempted to contact the TCEQ Region 10 coordinator but did not receive a call back today. We will continue to pursue that connection.

**QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

The Health Department still would like any brochures or information regarding aerobic treatment systems. They have questions regarding how to decontaminate systems that failed during the storm and flooding. Does EPA or TCEQ have documents explaining how to get the aerobic systems up and running properly?

If Jasper/Newton counties are afforded a Disaster Response Center, the team is ready to staff it with brochures and flyers already available.

## **COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

Debris is still piled along the streets and roads, especially in Deweyville. We have not heard confirmation on whether a contract has been let by the counties to pick up debris. It also does not appear that debris is being segregated from building and construction debris. Several churches and schools had large piles of debris and people still working to clean out the buildings. We also saw a number of gas stations and businesses that remain closed.

Roads, bridges and infrastructure continues to be a concern in both counties with many of the roads that are normally used for school bus routes in need of drastic repair after being washed out by extensive flooding. The team visited an area near the South Toledo Bend Reservoir where storm waters have washed away the earth under the bridge pilings causing its closer.

The absence of recovery activities in the two counties makes it difficult to gauge whether the counties are going to be able to begin to work toward normalcy. With the school districts trying to get all the schools back in operation, it will continue to labor under the absence of federal and state assistance.

As always, thanks for listening and your possible attention to these issues.

David, Jim, Jeremy and Devin